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Brosimum alicastrum

[Synonyms : *Alicastrum brownei*, *Brosimum bernadetteae*, *Brosimum columbianum*, *Brosimum konzattii*, *Brosimum gentlei*, *Brosimum latifolium*, *Brosimum terrabanum*, *Brosimum uleanum*, *Helicostylis bolivarensis*, *Helicostylis latifolia*, *Helicostylis ojoche*, *Piratinera alicastrum*, *Piratinera terrabana*]

BREADNUT is a tree. Native to tropical America and the Caribbean it has chestnut-like, yellow fruit.

It is also known as Brosimum, Capono, Mayan breadnut, Ramon, Ramon breadnut, Seeded breadnut, and Snakewood tree.

One tree can yield more than 2,000 lb. of seeds in a year.

The tree is especially tolerant of drought.

Alicastrum means 'wheat like'.

For the Mayans, whose civilisation began in about 2000 BC, breadnut provided a staple food – and the fruit have been harvested for their edible seeds since then. In more recent centuries they offered a source of food for the slaves on the European settlers' plantations.

Gathered locally as a vegetable, the seeds have to be boiled or roasted before they are eaten. They can then be used either whole, dried or ground in, most often, savoury dishes – and they have also been used as a coffee substitute or flour. Apparently in days gone by the fruit themselves used to be eaten boiled by poor white European settlers and by Negro slaves as a famine food to supplement salt-fish, pork, beef and pickle.

Livestock have been allowed to forage for or have been fed on the leafy branches for thousands of years.

The wood has been used locally for general carpentry and building.